

Eating extravaganza in Vegas

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By Kathryn Reed

When I lived in Las Vegas from 1993-96 I seldom went to the Strip. I'd tell friends where to go, what to see – even loan them my car. I'd go for the occasional show or maybe a meal.

Casinos don't do much for me. I seldom gamble. I don't like the toxic smoke, the noise, the artificial make-believe over-the-top one-upmanship of it all. I'd rather go to the real Paris, Venice and New York.

But one thing Vegas is definitely good for is scrumptious food. The dining options could get me to go back in a Southwest hour. Well-known chefs keep hanging their shingles in this desert outpost.

When I was in Vegas in June I ate out a lot, saw the hyper-energetic Bette Midler and stayed on the Strip at Caesars Palace. Frolicking pool-side in near 100-degree temps was another worthwhile indulgence. This is better people watching than the casino floor.

First up was Hubert Keller's Burger Bar. This is a veggie burger you won't find in the frozen food section. The concoction is a close second to the "homemade" one I've had at Moody's in Truckee. This is what we vegetarians call a true veggie burger.

Sue had a buffalo burger that she raved about until she got the bill. She hadn't realized how the build-your-own-burger gimmick would translate to build-a-bigger-bill.

Next night was Gandhi – truly authentic Indian food that had this vegetarian wondering if her stomach was going to

obscenely protrude at the pool the next day.

My final night of dining in Vegas was at Trevi in the Forum Shops next to Caesars. Location (walkable from the hotel room and to see Midler) and ethnicity (Italian) were the primary reasons for choosing this restaurant.

It more than satisfied our diverse taste buds, since Sue is likes that meat stuff. An array of dishes steadily flowed from the kitchen to our table for our sampling pleasure. Nothing was bad or even slightly undesirable. We could have easily eaten here every lunch and dinner.

Eating outside at Trevi's means being on a patio of sorts cordoned off from shoppers who are coming in and out of places like Tiffany, Gucci and Estee Lauder.

Instead of traditional garlic bread the restaurant offers Pizzetta Trevi, which is a rosemary flatbread with garlic and Parmesan cheese. It was a fun twist to get the night going. I'm not a big eggplant fan, but the Eggplant Parmigiana appetizer could convert me. The Caprese Salad (homemade mozzarella, tomatoes, basil, olive oil) was light and flavorful – an ideal summer starter.

The recipe for my favorite entree is below. The rich mushroom sauce is balanced by the spinach and cheese. The flavors meld to form a mouth-watering feast that isn't too heavy, despite the ingredients. All of Trevi's pastas are made fresh at the restaurant.

Fazzoletto Bertolini by Trevi Chef Peter Scaturro

1 6×6 sheet pasta

3 ounces sauteed spinach

3 ounces Ricotta

2 ounces Bacchamel

1/8 teaspoon chili flakes

Salt to taste

Pepper to taste

1 T shaved Parmesan

4 ounces wild mushroom sauce (made from a mixture of portabella, crimini and porcini mushrooms and vegetable stock)

Mix ricotta, spinach, salt and pepper in bowl. Cook pasta sheet in salted boiling water until tender, then drain well. Heat spinach-ricotta mix in sautee pan with Bacchmael. Add pasta sheet to spinach ricotta mixture and toss well. Place in a pasta bowl and ladle mushroom sauce over the top. Garnish with shaved Parmesan.

This is for one serving.